



HEATHSIDE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be ready in good time for the transport to ensure they arrive in school on time.

2. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Family holiday (only when prior approval has been given – see question 6)
- Extended family visits abroad (only when prior approval has been given – see question 7)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absences for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

5. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: the secretary will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's welfare as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should, wherever possible be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an application form, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:



- your child's age
- the time of the year
- overall attendance pattern of your child

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approves the visit, the school may set work for you child to complete while away. As far as possible we will ensure the work reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it, and add any comments or information you feel are important.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at:

Northern Area Education Office
Adrian House
Alexandra Road
Lowestoft
NR32 1PL

Tel 01502 405000

Southern Area Education Office
St Edmund House
Rope Walk
Ipswich
IP4 1LZ

Tel: 01473 583000

Western Area Education Office
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 1RX

Tel: 01284 352000